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Geographic Research Area Contribution to

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS  
BRIEFING PAPER

Geographic Intelligence

We maintain within our Office of Research and Reports a group of competent geographic analysts who provide research and technical support to all parts of the intelligence community and contribute substantially to the National Intelligence Survey Program.

A major part of the work of the geographic group, mostly in the form of geographic intelligence reports and maps, is undertaken in direct support of operations planning and field activities, either of the Agency or the Armed Services. On the accuracy of this effort may depend the success of vital operational missions and the lives of individuals put into hostile territory to accomplish them. Air Force crew members have been briefed, preparatory to special missions, using the geographic reports prepared by this Office on how to evade or escape should USAF planes crash land behind enemy lines. Similar reports are prepared in support of unconventional warfare and psychological warfare programs, incorporating intelligence on a wide variety of environmental factors including analyses of minority groups, border zones, strategic regions, routes of clandestine movement, target installations, and closely allied topics.

Geographic intelligence research has also been directed toward aiding the high level analysis of factors involved in foreign political

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crises affecting security interests of the United States. Other studies have contributed to the surveillance of USSR progress in nuclear energy, guided missiles, and biological warfare, and to the general influence of physical geographic factors on Communist capabilities to meet economic development goals. We devote increasing attention to the role of significant ethnic minorities in various world trouble spots.

During the past year, a number of geographic intelligence reports and briefings were prepared on USSR operations in Antarctica and the Soviet Arctic, with a particular view of assessing the significance of Soviet achievements and long-range intentions as they may affect United States interests in the Polar regions. In this work, we are closely supporting the Operations Coordinating Board through its Working Group on Antarctica. Support is also being given to the Department of State in the formulation of U.S. positions relative to the implementation of the provisions of the Antarctic Treaty. In association with the Office of Scientific Intelligence and the Armed Services, we are additionally analyzing Soviet geodetic activities as conducted within the USSR and abroad. By these analyses, the community is better able to evaluate Soviet progress in geodetic positioning for long-range targeting purposes.

Experience has shown that one of the most effective ways of presenting intelligence is to make extensive use of specially constructed maps. Our cartographic unit within the Office plans and prepares these

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intelligence maps for inclusion in CIA reports, National Intelligence Estimates, National Intelligence Surveys, and for many other purposes including covert planning and operations.

An extensive map library and map reference facility is also maintained for use by all authorized Government officials. Its specialized collection of foreign maps is kept current through a coordinated and highly effective inter-agency map procurement program that reflects the requirements of the several Government agencies having need for foreign maps and minimizes the possibility of duplicative collection efforts.

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